

CDC

MONTE HALE

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

Monte Hale

WESTERN

10¢

No 83

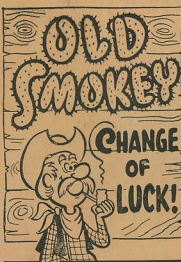
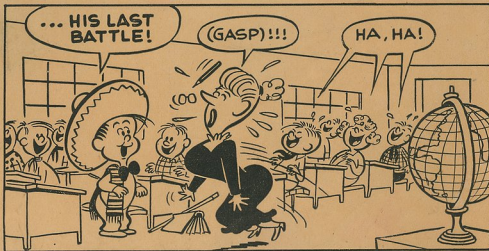
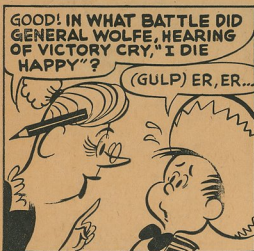
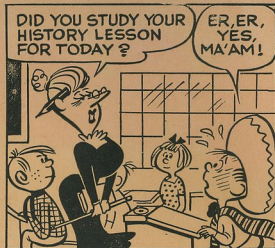
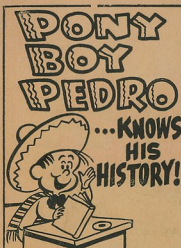


MONTE
HALE

The Biggest and Boldest
Real-Life Cowboy
of Them All
6 ft. 5 in.
OF
SOLID
MUSCLE



WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM





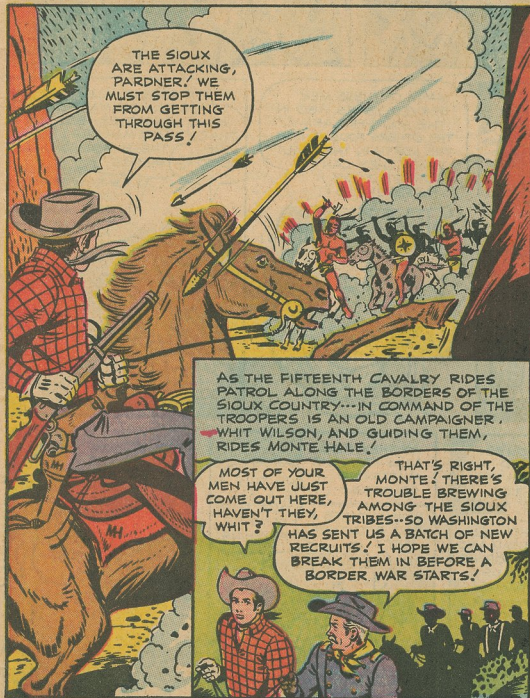
The following outstanding magazines are easily identified on their covers by the words A. CHARLTON PUBLICATION

ATOMIC MOUSE ★ BADGE OF JUSTICE ★ BLUE BEETLE ★ COWBOY LOVE ★ COWBOY WEST-ERN ★ DANGER AND ADVENTURE ★ FUNNY ANIMALS—MERRY MAILMAN ★ GABBY HAYES ★ HOT RODS and RACING CARS ★ LASH LaRUE ★ MONTE HALE ★ MY LITTLE MARGIE ★ ROCKY LANE ★ SIX-GUN HEROES ★ SOLDIER and MARINE ★ SPACE ADVENTURES—ROCKY JONES, SPACE RANGER ★ SWEETHEARTS ★ TEX RITTER ★ This is SUSPENSE ★ TRUE LIFE SECRETS ★ TV TEENS—DON WINSLOW of the NAVY ★ WIN-A-PRIZE ★ ZOO FUNNIES, NYOKA, JUNGLE GIRL

Every effort is made to insure that these comic magazines contain the highest quality of wholesome entertainment.

MONTE HALE

in TWO FLAGS AT DAWN

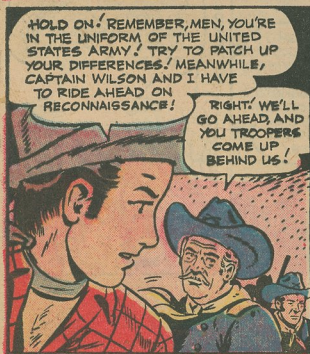
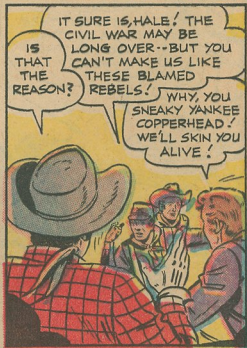
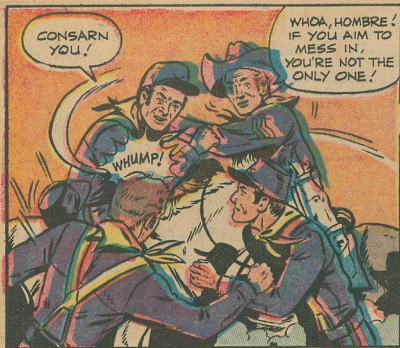


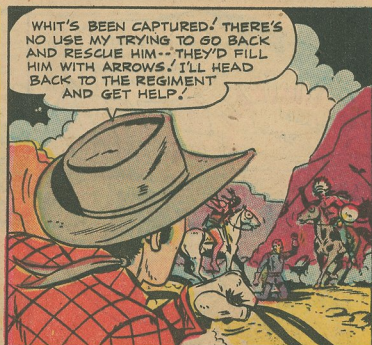
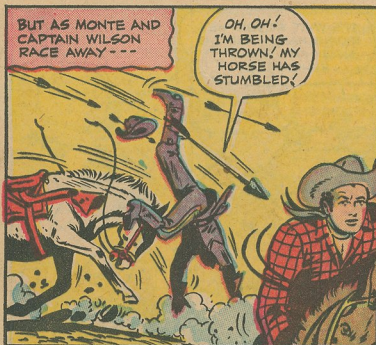
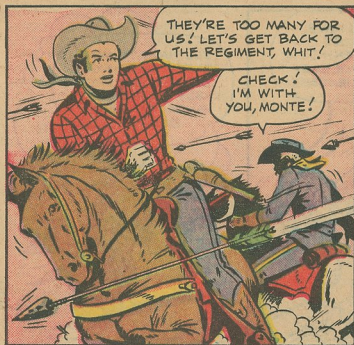
Old hatreds die slowly, and a bitter civil war left deep scars in the minds and hearts of men! But as shrill war-whoops rent the dawn air along the border slopes, Monte Hale knew that the divided troopers of the Fifteenth Cavalry would have to forget their lingering feud! Blue and Gray... North and South... they would have to join together to save the border settlements from the Sioux Nations!

DANG IT, MISTER! I WARNED YOU TO STOP RIDING CLOSE TO ME!

WHY YOU ORNERY, SLAB-SIDED VARMINT!



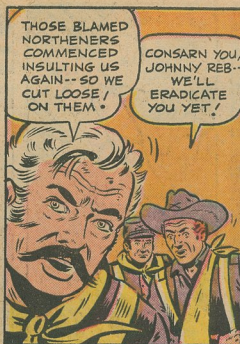






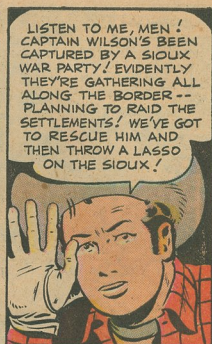
BUT WHEN MONTE
REACHES THE
TROOPERS ---

YOU MEN
HAVEN'T MOVED
FROM WHERE I
LEFT YOU! AND
YOU'RE BRUISED
AND BANDAGED!
WHAT HAPPENED?



THOSE BLAMED
NORTHERNERS
COMMENCED
INSULTING US
AGAIN-- SO WE
CUT LOOSE!
ON THEM!

CONSNARN YOU,
JOHNNY REB--
WE'LL
ERADICATE
YOU YET!



LISTEN TO ME, MEN!
CAPTAIN WILSON'S BEEN
CAPTURED BY A SIOUX
WAR PARTY! EVIDENTLY
THEY'RE GATHERING ALL
ALONG THE BORDER--
PLANNING TO RAID THE
SETTLEMENTS! WE'VE GOT
TO RESCUE HIM AND
THEN THROW A LASSO
ON THE SIOUX!



WE
WON'T RIDE
WITH THOSE
DOGGONE,
YANKEES.

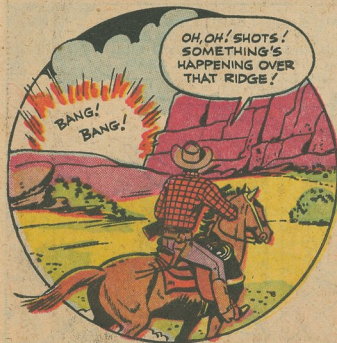
FORGET IT!
WE'RE PLUMB SORRY
ABOUT THE CAPTAIN
--BUT WE'RE NOT
AIMING TO GET
TOGETHER WITH
THOSE SOUTHERN
REBELS!



IN THAT CASE, I'LL HAVE
TO GO AFTER HIM BY
MYSELF! ADIOS, MEN-- I
HOPE YOU CAN LIVE EASY
WITH YOUR CONSCIENCES!



I'LL HAVE TO MOVE
FAST! THOSE SIOUX
BRAVES ARE PROBABLY
TAKING WHIT
BACK TO THEIR
CAMP!



BANG!
BANG!

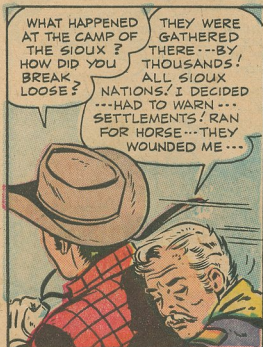
OH, OH! SHOTS!
SOMETHING'S
HAPPENING OVER
THAT RIDGE!



IT'S WHIT WILSON! HE'S
RIDING HARD--AND THE
SIOUX ARE RIGHT
BEHIND HIM!

BANG!

BANG!







INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE



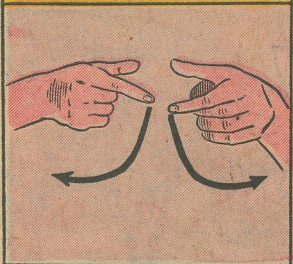
A COWBOY WESTERN FEATURE

INDIAN LORE

THE USE OF THE HANDS TO DESCRIBE SPEECH IS CALLED SIGN LANGUAGE. IT IS USED BY EVERY RACE ON THE GLOBE TODAY. THE AMERICAN INDIAN IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE BEST SIGN TALKER THE WORLD KNOWS. ONE COULD WATCH TWO INDIANS "TALK" FOR HOURS BY SIMPLE GESTURES OF THE HANDS.



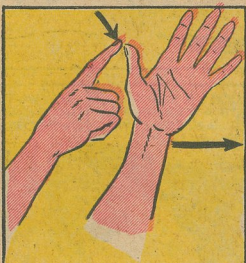
DRIVE- WITH HANDS OPPOSITE EACH OTHER AND THE SAME HEIGHT ABOUT AN INCH BETWEEN TIPS OF THUMBS; MOVE HANDS IN DIRECTION OF THE DRIVE.



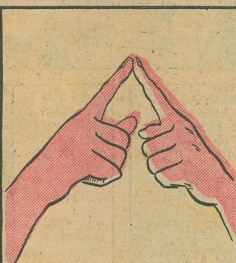
JEALOUS- HOLD LEFT HAND FLAT, BACK UP, AND WITH RIGHT HAND STAB UNDER ONCE OR TWICE.



JOKE- HOLD THE RIGHT HAND NEAR MOUTH, SWING THE HAND FORWARD AND UPWARD.



LAST. HOLD UP THE LEFT HAND, PUSH IT STRAIGHT AWAY, THEN TAP THE THUMB WITH THE RIGHT HAND.



MATE- PUT THE FINGERS IN TENT FORM, FINGERS TOUCHING.



MONEY- PLACE LEFT HAND FLAT, WITH RIGHT HAND DRAW SHAPE OF BILLS ON PALM.

EACH TRIBE OF INDIANS HAD THEIR OWN NAMES FOR THE MONTHS OF THE YEAR. HERE ARE THE MOST POPULAR.



JANUARY
SNOW MOON



FEBRUARY
HUNGER MOON



MARCH
CROW MOON



APRIL
GRASS MOON



MAY
PLANTING MOON



JUNE
ROSE MOON



JULY
THUNDER MOON



AUGUST
RED MOON



SEPTEMBER
HUNTING MOON



OCTOBER
LEAF-FALLING MOON



NOVEMBER
MAD MOON



DECEMBER
LONG-NIGHT MOON

GABBY HAYES

and
THE UNLUCKY
HORSESHOES



CORKER, OLD HOSS,
IF I DIDN'T LOVE YUH
LIKE A BROTHER, I
WOULDN'T GO TO ALL
THIS TROUBLE OF
MAKING YUH A NEW
SET OF SHOES!

CLANG!
CLANK!
CLUNNNGG!

WHINNEE!

WHILE GABBY WORKS, A VISITOR APPROACHES THE
BAR NOTHING RANCH.

GABBY HAYES LOVES
ANIMALS. HE'LL MAKE
A DONATION!



AND THE
VISITOR'S
APPROACH IS
SECRETLY
OBSERVED
BY TWO
NOTORIOUS
OUTLAWS,
VIC
VULTURE
AND
BILL
BUZZARD.

LOOK! A HOMBRE
WITH A SATCHEL FULL
OF MAZUMA! LET'S
GET HIM!

NO! WAIT!
THAT'S HORACE
WHIFFLETREE!



SO WHAT?

HE'S PRESIDENT OF THE
B-K-B. AND B. SOCIETY.



WHAT IN
TARNATION
IS THAT?

THE BE KIND TO BEASTS AND BUGS
SOCIETY. HE WOULDN'T BOP A
BEE IF IT BIT HIM ON THE
BEEZER!



HE'S COLLECTING MONEY FOR THE HOME FOR HOMELESS POLECATS. WE'LL JUST WAIT TILL HE'S COLLECTED ALL OF IT. THEN WE'LL JUMP HIM.



WHILE THE GUNMEN LURK IN HIDING, HORACE ARRIVES AT THE BAR. NOTHING.



HORACE WHIFFLETREE! HOW BE YUH?

GABBY HAYES! I'M ASHAMED OF YOU!

FOR SHAME! DRIVING NAILS IN THAT HORSE'S FOOT!

HUH! HOW ELSE WOULD A HOSS SHOE STAY PUT? BESIDES, IT DOESN'T HURT!



DOESN'T HURT? HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT IF SOMEBODY NAILED A SHOE ON YOUR FOOT?



MOMENT LATER---

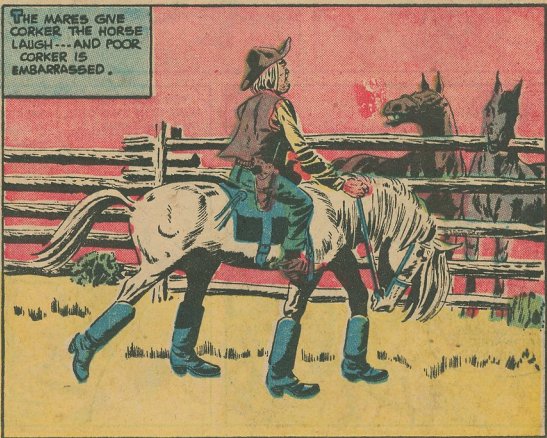
BALLS OF FIRE! HORACE SURE LEFT IN A HUFF! AND HE STRIPPED OFF MY MEMBERSHIP BUTTON IN THE B.K.B. AND B. I'VE JUST GOT TO PROVE TO HIM THAT HUMAN SHOES FOR HOSES AREN'T PRACTICAL!



EASY, CORKER BOY! THESE ARE THE BIGGEST BOOTS I COULD FIND.



THE MARES GIVE CORKER THE HORSE LAUGH---AND POOR CORKER IS EMBARRASSED.



AND ON THE ROAD TO TOWN ---

RECKON HORACE HAS
COLLECTED ALL THE
MONEY HE'S GOING TO
GET. LET'S JUMP
HIM NOW!

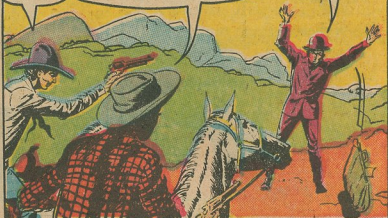
YIPPEE!



RAISE
YORE
HANDS!

IF THAT MONEY'S FOR
POLECATS, RECKON WE'LL
TAKE IT! HO-HO!

HEAVENS!
A HOLDUP!



AT THAT MOMENT, GABBY
ARRIVES!

DROP THE
HARDWARE,
YUH VARMINTS!

LOOK AT THAT,
HA-HA-HA!

A HOSS
WITH
BOOTIES
ON, HO-
HO-HO!



THE RIDICULE IS TOO MUCH FOR
CORKER!

HEY, CORKER! STEADY,
BOY! ULP!



YUH DIRTY
OWLHOOTS! IF
I COULD GET
AT MY GUNS,
I'D FIX YUH!

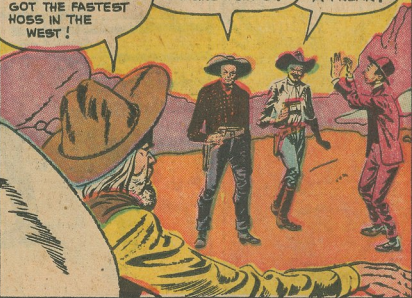
HA,
HA!

HO, HO!

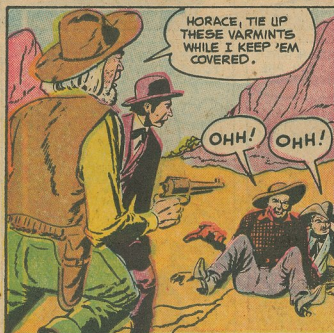
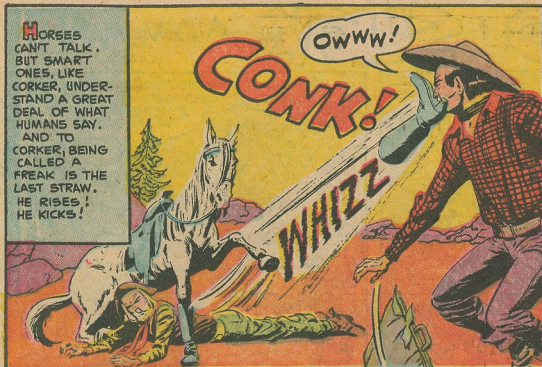
YUH WON'T GET
AWAY WITH THIS! I'LL
TRAIL YUH DOWN! I
GOT THE FASTEST
HOSS IN THE
WEST!

FAST? HOW CAN
HE RUN WEARING
DANCING PUMPS?

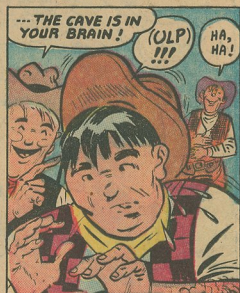
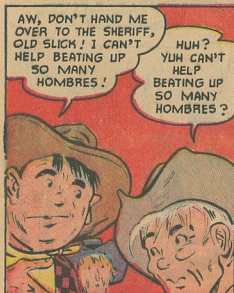
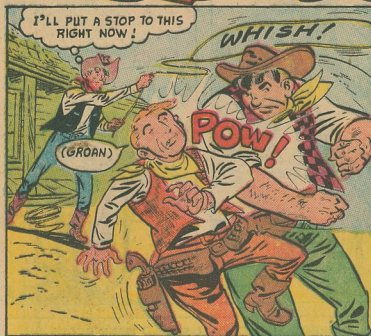
FAST? HE
LOOKS LIKE
A FREAK!



HORSES
CAN'T TALK.
BUT SMART
ONES, LIKE
CORKER, UNDER-
STAND A GREAT
DEAL OF WHAT
HUMANS SAY.
AND TO
CORKER, BEING
CALLED A
FREAK IS THE
LAST STRAW.
HE RISES!
HE KICKS!



OLD SLICK A CAVE MAN!



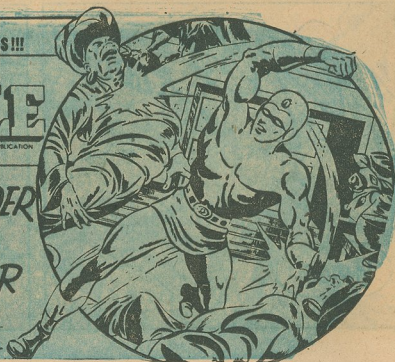
EXTRA!! the BLUE BEETLE RETURNS!!!

THE BLUE BEETLE

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

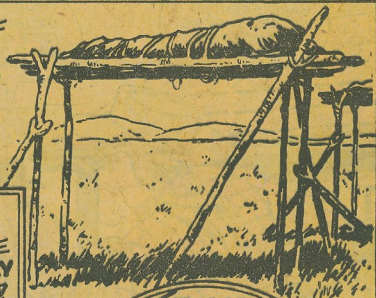
AMERICA'S CRUSADER
OF
LAW AND ORDER

10¢ NOW AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND! 10¢



Imagine THAT!

WHEN A POWAHATAN INDIAN CHIEF DIED, HIS FLESH WAS REMOVED FROM HIS BONES AND **DRIED**... IT WAS THEN WRAPPED TOGETHER WITH THE BONES IN A MAT AND LAID IN ITS PROPER ORDER WITH OTHERS WHO HAD **PREVIOUSLY DIED**!



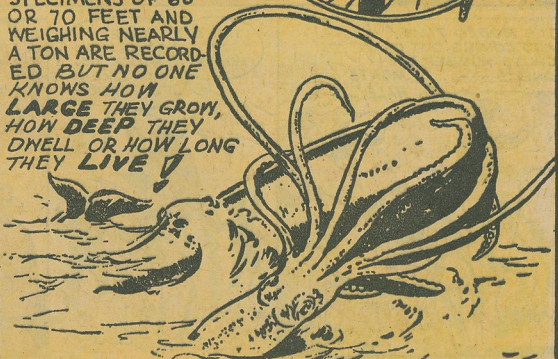
PARROTS ARE **NOT** THE **ONLY** TALKING BIRDS! THE WATTLED MYNA FROM THE MALAY REGION IS AN EXCELLENT TALKER AND CAN LEARN TO SPEAK AS CLEARLY AS THE **BEST OF THE PARROTS**!

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, INAUGURATED AT THE AGE OF 42 YEARS WAS THE **YOUNGEST** PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES!



IN JAVA A POPULAR CURE FOR GOUT OR RHEUMATISM IS TO RUB SPANISH PEPPER INTO THE NAILS OF THE **FINGERS AND TOES** OF THE **SUFFERER**!

THE GIANT SQUID IS A MYSTERY OF THE SEA! SPECIMENS OF 60 OR 70 FEET AND WEIGHING NEARLY A TON ARE RECORDED **BUT NO ONE KNOWS HOW LARGE THEY GROW, HOW DEEP THEY DWELL OR HOW LONG THEY LIVE**!

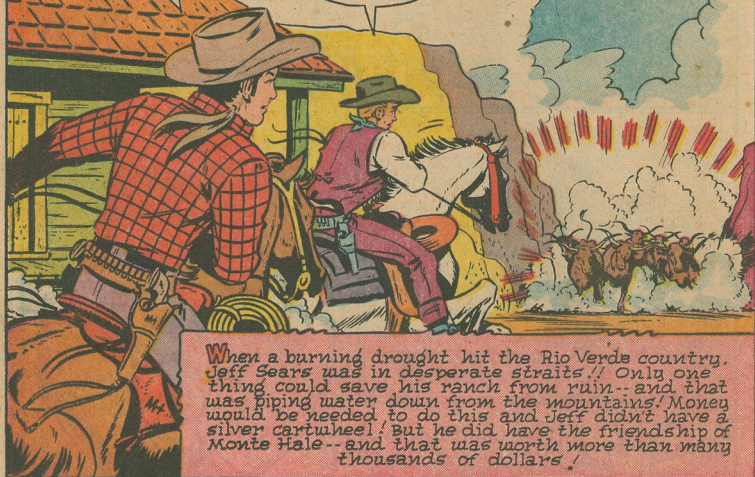


MONTE HALE

in RODEO GUN-TRAIL

THE CATTLE
HAVE SCENTED
WATER! THEY'RE
STAMPEDING
TOWARD US!

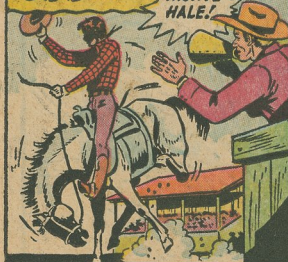
THEY'LL
CRUSH US!
WE'VE GOT TO
HEAD THEM
OFF!



When a burning drought hit the Rio Verde country, Jeff Sears was in desperate straits!! Only one thing could save his ranch from ruin--and that was piping water down from the mountains! Money would be needed to do this and Jeff didn't have a silver cartwheel! But he did have the friendship of Monte Hale--and that was worth more than many thousands of dollars!

IT'S RODEO TIME!
AND COMING OUT OF
CHUTE NUMBER
ONE IS ---

MONTE
HALE!



TIME'S
UP,
MONTE!

NICE
GOING! YOU
STUCK TO
HIM LIKE
FLY-PAPER.

RINNING!



L
A
T
E
R

FIRST PLACE IN
BRONC-BUSTING,
CALF-ROPING AND
BULL-DOGGING
GOES TO
MONTE
HALE!

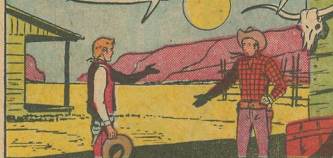
HURRAY!
HE SURE
DESERVED
IT!



WHY IS MONTE RIDING THE RODEO TRAIL AGAIN? THE ANSWER IS TO BE FOUND SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE!

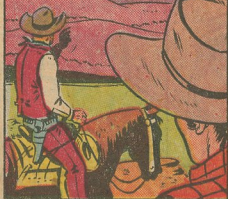
MONTE, IT HASN'T RAINED IN TWO MONTHS. THE GROUND'S AS DRY AS SAND. NOTHING WILL GROW IN IT, AND MY CATTLE ARE BEGINNING TO DIE LIKE FLIES.

ISN'T IT POSSIBLE TO BRING WATER IN IN SOME WAY TO IRRIGATE THE SOIL AND GIVE THE HERD WATER, JEFF?



THE ONLY WATER IS UP THERE IN THE HILLS -- AND IT WOULD COST A FORTUNE TO TRY TO PIPE IT DOWN!

JUST HOW MUCH WOULD IT BE, JEFF?



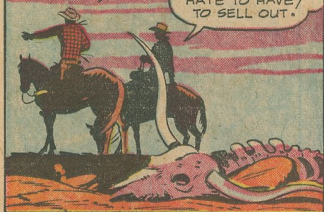
PROBABLY TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS! BEFORE I EVER SEE THAT MUCH MONEY, EVERY STEER ON MY SPREAD WILL BE PLUMB DECEASED.

MAYBE -- AND MAYBE NOT.

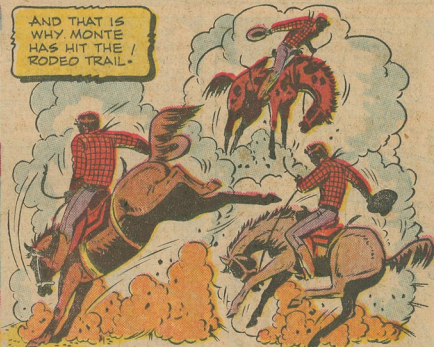


IF I SET OUT WITH PARDNER ON THE RODEO CIRCUIT--WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO WIN ENOUGH PRIZES TO PAY FOR PIPING THE WATER DOWN.

I SURE HOPE SO, PARD. I'VE HAD AN OFFER FOR THE RANCH FROM A NEIGHBOR, RINGO SMITH. BUT I'D HATE TO HAVE TO SELL OUT.



AND THAT IS WHY MONTE HAS HIT THE RODEO TRAIL.



SOON--

FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS IN PRIZES! NOT BAD, EH, PARD? AND IF I CAN WIN THE GRAND PRIZE AT THE ALAMO JAMBOREEE--JEFF WILL HAVE THE TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS HE NEEDS TO SAVE HIS RANCH.



LET'S RIDE, FRIEND! WE'LL BE AT ALAMO SOON --- READY TO REGISTER FOR THE BIG RODEO!

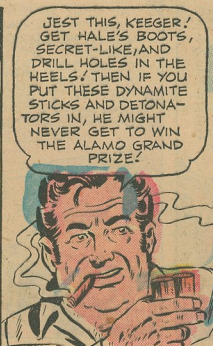


MEANWHILE, IN A RANCH HOUSE NEAR JEFF SEARS' SPREAD--

I TELL YOU, RINGO, HALE'S CLEANING UP AT THESE RODEOS! SEARS WILL SOON HAVE THE MONEY HE NEEDS--AND HE'LL NEVER SELL HIS SPREAD TO YOU!

MAYBE WE'D BETTER TAKE STEPS! DECISIVE STEPS.

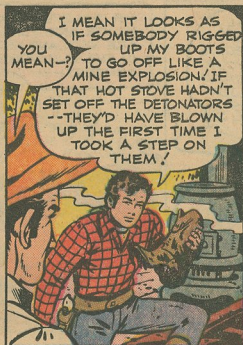






WHAT
HAPPENED,
MONTE?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT
IF I'D BEEN TEN FEET
CLOSER--YOU'D HAVE
HAD TO SCRAPE ME
TOGETHER TO PUT ME
IN A COFFIN!



YOU
MEAN--?

I MEAN IT LOOKS AS
IF SOMEBODY RIGGED
UP MY BOOTS
TO GO OFF LIKE A
MINE EXPLOSION! IF
THAT HOT STOVE HADN'T
SET OFF THE DETONATORS
--THEY'D HAVE BLOWN
UP THE FIRST TIME I
TOOK A STEP ON
THEM!

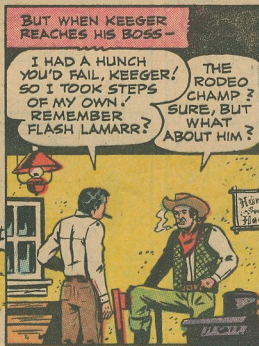


SOMEONE'S
SURE TRYING TO
PUT ME OUT OF
THE WAY! BUT
WHO?



AND MEANWHILE--

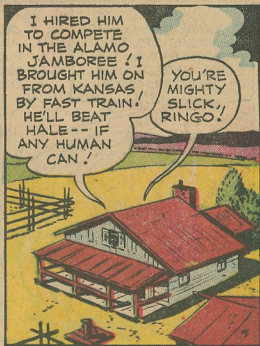
THAT HALE
HAS ALL THE LUCK!
WAIT TILL RINGO
HEARS ABOUT
THIS!



BUT WHEN KEEGER
REACHES HIS BOSS--

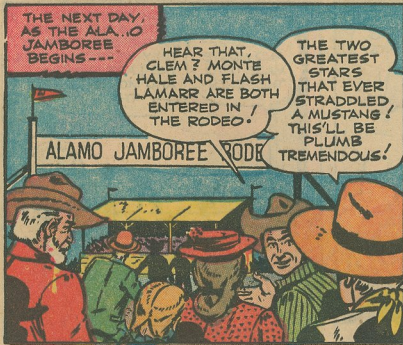
I HAD A HUNCH
YOU'D FAIL, KEEGER!
SO I TOOK STEPS
OF MY OWN!
REMEMBER
FLASH LAMARR?

THE
RODEO
CHAMP?
SURE, BUT
WHAT
ABOUT HIM?



I HIRED HIM
TO COMPETE
IN THE ALAMO
JAMBOREE! I
BROUGHT HIM ON
FROM KANSAS
BY FAST TRAIN!
HE'LL BEAT
HALE-- IF
ANY HUMAN
CAN!

YOU'RE
MIGHTY
SLICK!
RINGO!



THE NEXT DAY,
AS THE ALAMO
JAMBOREE
BEGINS---

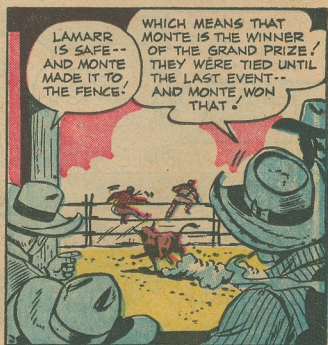
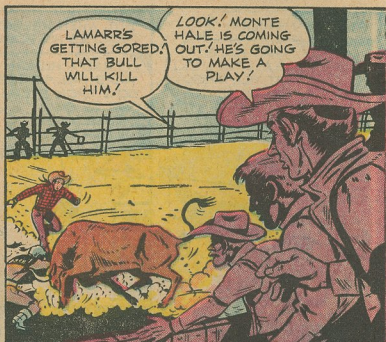
HEAR THAT,
CLEM? MONTE
HALE AND FLASH
LAMARR ARE BOTH
ENTERED IN!
THE RODEO.

THE TWO
GREATEST
STARS
THAT EVER
STRADDLED
A MUSTANG!
THIS'LL BE
PLUMB
TREMENDOUS!



GO AHEAD,
HALE! DO YOUR
BEST AND I'LL
BEAT IT!

WE'LL SEE,
LAMARR!
LET'S RIDE
--NOT
TALK.



AFTER MONTE
IS AWARDED THE
GRAND PRIZE--

MONTE, YOU SAVED
MY LIFE! I GOT TO
THANK YOU--AND I
WANT TO TELL YOU
SOMETHING!

SHUCKS,
FLASH; I
WAS THE
ONLY ONE
CLOSE
ENOUGH
TO HELP!
BUT WHAT
DID YOU WANT
TO SAY?

IT WAS RINGO SMITH,
JEFF SEARS' NEIGHBOR,
WHO TRIED TO KILL YOU
WITH THAT DYNAMITE!
AND HE HIRED ME TO
BEAT YOU IN THE RODEO,
SO YOU COULDN'T WIN
ENOUGH MONEY TO SAVE
SEARS' RANCH! I SAW
HIM LEAVE THE RODEO
WHEN YOU WON!

I RECKON HE'S HEADING
TOWARD SEARS' SPREAD!
HE HINTED THAT HE HAD
ONE MORE ACE UP HIS
SLEEVE IN CASE I
COULDN'T STOP
YOU FROM
WINNING!

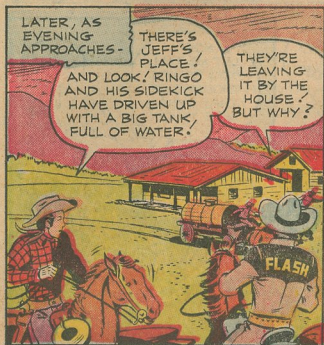
THEN
LET'S GET
AFTER HIM!
C'MON, PARD!



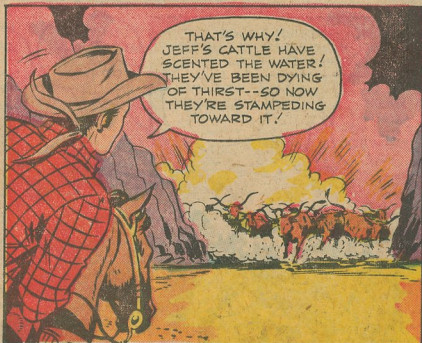
LATER, AS
EVENING
APPROACHES--

THERE'S
JEFF'S
PLACE!
AND LOOK! RINGO
AND HIS SIDEKICK
HAVE DRIVEN UP
WITH A BIG TANK
FULL OF WATER.

THEY'RE
LEAVING
IT BY THE
HOUSE!
BUT WHY?



THAT'S WHY!
JEFF'S CATTLE HAVE
SCENTED THE WATER!
THEY'VE BEEN DYING
OF THIRST--SO NOW
THEY'RE STAMPEDING
TOWARD IT!



SMITH AND KEEGER
SET IT AS A TRAP.
THOSE CRAZY LONG-
HORNS'LL KNOCK
DOWN THE HOUSE
AND TRAMPLE
EVERYONE IN IT
TO SMITHEREENS!

WE'VE
GOT TO
HEAD
THEM OFF!
RIDE FOR
THE TANK!

GIDDAP,
YOU
CRITTERS!
WE'RE
HEADING
OUT OF
HERE!

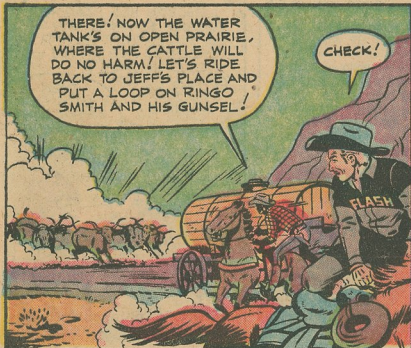
WHAT'S
YOUR
PLAN,
MONTE?



WE'LL GET THIS
TANK OUT OF
HERE--AND THE
LONGHORNS WILL
FOLLOW! THAT
WAY WE MAY
BE ABLE TO
SAVE THE
HOUSE!

IT'S
WORKING!
THEY'RE
COMING
AFTER US!
THEY SMELL
THE WATER!





THERE! NOW THE WATER TANK'S ON OPEN PRAIRIE, WHERE THE CATTLE WILL DO NO HARM! LET'S RIDE BACK TO JEFF'S PLACE AND PUT A LOOP ON RINGO SMITH AND HIS GUNSEL!

CHECK!



LOOK! THEY SAW THEIR PLAN DIDNT WORK --AND THEY'RE HEADING FOR OPEN COUNTRY!

LET'S CUT THEM OFF!



URGING PARDNER TO HIS TOP SPEED, MONTE CATCHES UP TO THE FLEEING PAIR!

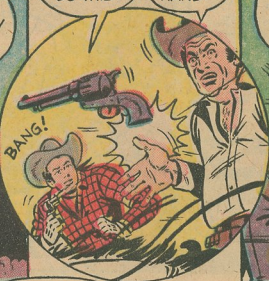
WHOA BACK, GENTS! I AIM TO TALK TO YOU!

I'LL LET MY COLT DO MY TALKING, HALE!

BANG!
BANG!

IN THAT CASE, I'LL HAVE TO DO THIS!

AAGH! MY HAND!



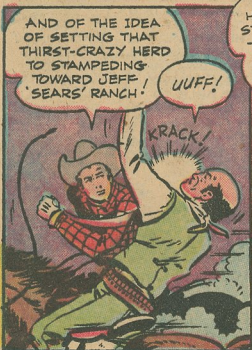
BANG!



NOW LET ME TELL YOU WHAT I THOUGHT OF THAT DYNAMITE TRICK!

UFFF!

WHUMP!



AND OF THE IDEA OF SETTING THAT THIRST-CRAZY HERD TO STAMPEDING TOWARD JEFF SEARS' RANCH!

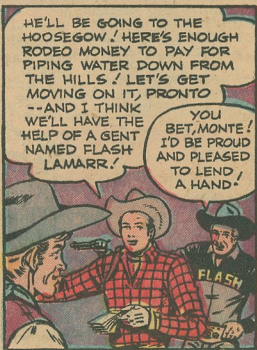
UFFF!

KRACK!



MONTE! I HEARD CATTLE STAMPEDING BY --AND THEN SHOTS! WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

REST EASY, JEFF! YOUR NEIGHBOR HAD A LITTLE NOTION ABOUT ACQUIRING YOUR PROPERTY!



WE'LL BE GOING TO THE HOOSEGOW! HERE'S ENOUGH RODEO MONEY TO PAY FOR PIPING WATER DOWN FROM THE HILLS! LET'S GET MOVING ON IT, PRONTO --AND I THINK WE'LL HAVE THE HELP OF A GENT NAMED FLASH LAMARR!

YOU BET, MONTE! I'D BE PROUD AND PLEASED TO LEND A HAND!

WATERFALL OF DOOM

A Gray Hawk Adventure

By Dick Kraus



GRAY HAWK suddenly lifted his head, his ruddy features clearly profiled against the rich green of the forest foliage. His eyes narrowed to calculating slits as he saw a tall buck move cautiously out into the clearing. Many-pronged were the antlers of the deer, and its great dark nostrils sniffed nervously at the air—probing for the scent of the Indian boy who lay in hiding. Slowly, carefully, Gray Hawk drew a slender feathered shaft from the quiver that hung over his shoulder. He notched it and drew the bow back as far as it would go.

"Now!" he breathed, releasing the arrow.

The deadly shaft hummed through the air! In swift panic, the buck whirled. Desperately it sought to evade the arrow. But it was useless—for Gray Hawk's shot was straight and true. For a moment the deer staggered, and then with a mighty bound, disappeared in the underbrush.

Gray Hawk rose. He fitted another arrow to his bowstring. Since the Indian hunters slew only for food, it was a crime to let an injured animal escape to die alone in the underbrush. He would have to find him!

Over the carpet of pine-needles, through dark forest corridors and past giant boulders, the Indian boy followed the trail of the wounded deer. While he felt sorry for the proud beast, he knew that meat was badly needed in the Otapi village. Eagerly he followed the buck, winding higher and higher through the forest land. As he continued to climb, the trees grew sparser and he began to hear a trickling, gurgling sound in the distance.

As he came out into the open, Gray Hawk suddenly hesitated. There before him, he saw a waterfall pouring down between two cleft walls of a towering chasm. This was the Waterfall of the Dead Men! Many years before, a party of Otapi warriors had attempted to pass through the waterfall to see what lay beyond. They had never returned and since then it was said that a curse lay on the waterfall. Since

that time, no Otapi had attempted to venture close to it. But Gray Hawk, painstakingly following the trail of the wounded buck, saw that it led straight toward the falls!

The bronzed youth's jaw set in determination.

"If a wounded deer can go through the falls," he muttered, "so can I!"

Hunching his shoulders, he plunged forward beneath the thundering torrent. At once he seemed to be tossed about in the grip of a mighty force that pitched him this way and that. But somehow keeping his footing on the mossy-surfaced rocks beneath the stream, the Otapi boy forced his way on. After several moments of unrelenting effort, he came out into the open air again. Looking ahead Gray Hawk saw that the trail of the wounded buck led up over some high, slate strewn ground and disappeared in a cave cut in the side of the high chasm wall.

For a moment, Gray Hawk hesitated. He remembered the tales of the warriors who had disappeared years before. Then, muscles taut with resolve, he entered the dank, winding cavern . . .

It was late that afternoon when Gray Hawk returned to the village of the Otapi; the skies were lowering and purple in the west. On his shoulder, the son of the chief bore the carcass of the great deer that he had shot and trailed to the cavern past the Waterfall of the Dead Men. Seeing the youth enter the village with his prize, the elders and warriors of the tribe gathered around. But when they found out where he had gone in pursuit of the wounded stag, their visages turned grim and dark.

"You passed through the Waterfall of the Dead Men!" a wrinkled elder exclaimed accusingly. "But that's accursed! No Otapi has done that for many years!"

Gray Hawk raised a hand in protest.

"What was I to do?" he asked quietly. "Let the deer escape? And besides, nothing has yet happened to me! I have returned, have I not?"

"Yes," nodded the ancient, shaking a gnarled fist venomously. "You have returned—to bring evil to this tribe! Manitou will punish us all. It will be seen!" As if to lend support to his prophecy, a roll of thunder suddenly boomed through the mountains, and several great drops splattered suddenly on the ground!

That night, the rains came. Steady, unrelenting and all-pervading, they poured down on the forest, the mountainside and the low valley in which the Otapi tribe was camped. Great drops bucketed down in swift succession—forming tiny rills that raced down the slopes, joining into brooks, tumbling creeks and pools: Thunder roared sullenly and lightning crackled, and still the rain lashed down. By the time morning came, the ground was sodden and heavy and the sound of rushing waters could be heard everywhere. The warriors and elders of the tribe met in worried consultation. A mile below the Otapi camp, a lake had swiftly formed and was backing up the narrow valley! Soon it would reach the camp!

"We are in grave peril," the chief of the tribe, Gray Eagle, said slowly. "In three hours, perhaps two, the flood will reach us! Our tipis will be swept away and we will all drown unless, somehow, we can manage to escape!"

The chief scanned the grim faces of his companions. Then he went on. "But where can we escape to? How can we leave this valley? We cannot go further down, for there lies the surging water! We cannot go through the notch of Big Tongue Mountain. A scout has just brought word that giant trees have been struck by lightning and have fallen, clogging up the pass! There is nowhere for us to go—and death will come here soon!"

The bony, wrinkled elder who had predicted doom the night before burst out angrily, "And it is all the fault of that boy of yours, that Gray Hawk! He angered the gods, and now we are being punished for his evil!"

All eyes slowly turned as Gray Hawk walked into the circle.

"If this is so," he began, his voice husky, "I would give my life at once to pay for my sin! But perhaps that deer led me through the waterfall yesterday for another reason. Perhaps Manitou wanted me to know where the tribe would be safe from a flood! Perhaps it was his will that I go through the falls and that I now lead the tribe up through it . . ."

"Through it?" the elder scoffed. "Bah! As if you have not done enough! We will die in the twinkling of an eye!"

"Wait!" said Gray Eagle. "The boy may be right. If we wait here, we can only die. We have no other escape route. Let us follow him!"

Quickly issuing orders, the chief directed the men of the tribe to prepare for instant flight. As the rains swelled, blanketing the forest with an almost solid sheet of falling water, the braves and squaws quickly tore down tipis and within half an hour, the tribe was filing through the forest. Behind them, water began to lap hungrily at the camp site they had just left, and far to the west, Big Tongue Mountain Pass was blocked and impenetrable! They had but one chance, the chance represented by the Waterfall of Dead Men!

Higher and higher they went, until at last they reached the raging falls. The rain had redoubled its fury, so that it appeared like a vicious, untamed forest beast.

"Quick!" shouted Gray Hawk through the howl of the rain. "Take my hand and form a single line! I will lead you through."

The son of the chief plunged waist-deep into the pool, and then directly into the waterfall. Stepping carefully from stone to stone, Gray Hawk fought his way safely through the falls. And behind him, clutching hands with fear-hardened grips, came the members of the tribe. Slipping, stumbling, swerving, head-down and persisting, they came through, one by one!

"**N**OW!" said Gray Hawk. "Up there!" He pointed up at the cave that waited, high up the chasm wall. "The waters will never reach up there. We will be safe and dry until the flood stops!"

As the members of the tribe struggled eagerly upward to reach the cave shelter, Gray Hawk suddenly realized that his guess had been right! If that deer had not led him through the falls, and helped him find this high cave, the tribe would have been doomed. Rather than a sin committed against Manitou, it was Manitou's way of helping him save his people! The forest god had spoken in a strange way, through the form of a dying deer.

"A strange way," muttered Gray Hawk, as he bent to enter the cave mouth, "but Manitou is always with us!"

THE END



MONTE HALE

in SAFE-CRACKERS UNLIMITED

SAFE-CRACKERS
UNLIMITED! I
THOUGHT I'D FIND
YOU HERE!

YOU'LL
NEVER LIVE
TO TELL ABOUT
IT, HALE!

HISTORY HAS BEEN
FILLED WITH THE
EXPLOITS OF CLEVER
SAFE-CRACKERS-- BUT
MONTE HALE HAD
NEVER MET A BANK-
ROBBING BAND THAT
WORKED WITH SUCH
UNERRING EFFICIENCY
AS THE GANG CALLED
SAFE-CRACKERS UNLIMITED!
NOR HAD HE EVER
BEEN IN AS DEADLY
PERIL AS WHEN HE
FINALLY CRACKED THE
CASE AND WOUND UP
A PRISONER OF THE
BADMEN!

Monte Hale rides into the
cattle and farming town
of Mills!

THERE'S NEWT
SIMMONS, OWNER
OF THE LOCAL BANK!
AND THERE'S A MOB
OF PEOPLE SHOUTING
AT HIM!

GIVE
US OUR
MONEY BACK,
SIMMONS!
YOUR BANK
ISN'T SAFE!

RIGHT!
I'M
PULLING
ALL MY
SAVINGS
OUT,
PRONTO!

PLEASE
LISTEN
TO ME!

WE'VE
LISTENED
ENOUGH!
GET OUT
OF MY WAY--
I WANT MY
MONEY!

HOLD ON,
MISTER! LET'S
HEAR BOTH SIDES
OF THIS STORY--
AND WE'LL FIND
OUT WHAT IT'S
ALL ABOUT!



The bank president explains!

THE BANK HAS BEEN ROBBED TWICE IN THE LAST MONTH--BY A CLEVER BAND OF SAFE-CRACKERS! NOW THESE PEOPLE ARE PANICKY AND WANT TO PULL THEIR DEPOSITS OUT!

BUT IF THEY ALL DO THAT AT ONCE, THE BANK WILL FOLD!

THAT'S RIGHT! WE'LL BE RUINED--ALL OF US!

LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU! NEWT, SIMMONS IS AN HONEST MAN, YOU'LL GET YOUR MONEY BACK! BUT FIRST, GIVE US A WEEK TO CATCH THE ROBBERS AND PUT THE MONEY THEY STOLE BACK IN THE BANK!

A WEEK? HOW DO WE KNOW OUR MONEY'S SAFE?

YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE A CHANCE! TO PROVE I'M PLAYING SQUARE WITH YOU, HERE'S WHAT I'LL DO...

HERE'S ALL THE MONEY I'VE GOT IN THE WORLD! NEWT, TAKE THIS AND DEPOSIT IT FOR ME IN YOUR BANK!

THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME! IF MONTE HALE TRUSTS THE MILLS EXCHANGE BANK--SO DO I! YOU CAN HAVE MY MONEY FOR A WEEK!

ME TOO!

Soon, inside the bank...

THEY ALL AGREED NOT TO DEMAND THEIR DEPOSITS FOR A WEEK! BUT TELL ME, NEWT, WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

LOOK AT THAT SAFE, MONTE! THAT'S YOUR ANSWER! A GANG OF BADMEN BROKE IN LAST NIGHT--OPENED IT EASILY AND GOT AWAY WITH ALL THE MONEY IN IT!

THEY FIGURED OUT THE COMBINATION ALL RIGHT! NOT A MARK ON IT! AND YOU SAY THIS HAPPENED EARLIER THIS MONTH, TOO?

TWO WEEKS AGO! I GOT A NEW SAFE FROM THE GIBRALTAR COMPANY, AND PUT IT IN! BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP THE ROBBERS!

WELL, NEWT, WE'VE GOT A WEEK TO FIND THE GANG AND GET THE MONEY BACK! I'LL GET RIGHT TO WORK ON IT!

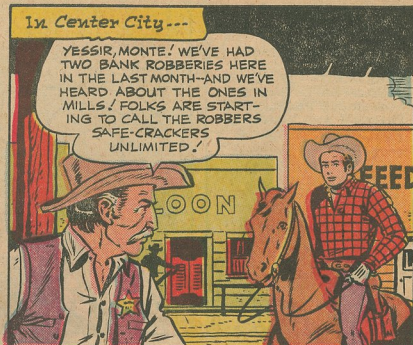
THANKS, MONTE! THOSE FOLKS WOULD HAVE RUINED THE BANK TODAY IF YOU HADN'T ARGUED THEM OUT OF IT!

And soon--



COME ON, PARD!
LET'S FIND OUT
IF THIS KIND OF
SAFE-CRACKING HAS
BEEN HAPPENING IN
OTHER TOWNS HERE-
ABOUTS! LET'S
TALK TO SOME
SHERIFFS!

In Center City---



YESSIR, MONTE! WE'VE HAD
TWO BANK ROBBERIES HERE
IN THE LAST MONTH--AND WE'VE
HEARD ABOUT THE ONES IN
MILLS! FOLKS ARE START-
ING TO CALL THE ROBBERS
SAFE-CRACKERS
UNLIMITED!

And in
Cattle
Junction--



SAME HERE, MONTE! SAFE-
CRACKERS UNLIMITED! BOTH
OF OUR BANKS LAST
MONTH! AND BOTH OF THEM
HAD NEW SAFES FROM THE
GIBRALTAR SAFE COMPANY
OVER IN JOHNSON CITY!

THAT'S THE
SAME KIND
THE BANKS
HAD IN MILLS
AND CENTER
CITY!

THANKS, SHERIFF! YOU'VE
GIVEN ME MY FIRST REAL
CLUE. I'M HEADING FOR
JOHNSON CITY!



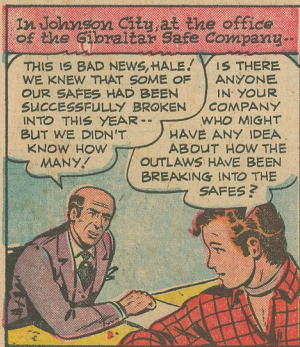
GENERAL ST

MEATS & PROVISIONS

SHERIFF

GOOD
LUCK,
MONTE!

In Johnson City, at the office
of the Gibraltar Safe Company--



THIS IS BAD NEWS, HALE!
WE KNEW THAT SOME OF
OUR SAFES HAD BEEN
SUCCESSFULLY BROKEN
INTO THIS YEAR--
BUT WE DIDN'T
KNOW HOW
MANY!

IS THERE
ANYONE
IN YOUR
COMPANY
WHO MIGHT
HAVE ANY IDEA
ABOUT HOW THE
OUTLAWS HAVE BEEN
BREAKING INTO THE
SAFES?

SILAS MORGAN, OUR
HEAD SALESMAN,
WOULD KNOW MORE
THAN ANYONE. I'LL
CALL HIM!



MORGAN, DO
YOU HAVE
ANY IDEA
HOW SO MANY
GIBRALTAR
SAFES HAVE
BEEN
ROBBED
RECENTLY?

I SURE DON'T,
HALE! OUR
SAFES ARE
PERFECTLY
BURGLAR PROOF
--AND ALWAYS
HAVE BEEN! I
MAINTAIN THAT
THESE BURGLARIES
MUST HAVE BEEN
INSIDE JOBS!

